

You look at this crowd here. How many people do you believe that all of you will see who never come to a political event like this between now and Tuesday, November the 3d—tens of thousands? A hundred thousand? All the people you work with, the people you socialize with, the people you worship with, the people you bump into at a coffee shop—how many people will you see?

I'm telling you, we are about the business of defining our country and what it will be like. If you were heartbroken when that young man was killed, if you were elated by the fact that these two people—Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat—were able to reach across this great divide and say, hey, we don't exactly know what's out there, but we're going to jump off this high diving board together—and I might say, they deserve the credit, not me. It was an honor for me, every minute of it. But if you felt that, that means you know that we can't define our future by putting down people who are different from us, and we can't get ahead by pushing people behind. You know that.

You may think this is easy enough for me to say because I have no more elections in me. But I promise you, I believe this—the greatest victories we all win in life are not the victories we win over other people. It's the victories we win for our common humanity.

A day after this election, the great joy of Barbara Boxer's life will not be that she defeated Mr. Fong. He has been a worthy opponent. They have had a good race. The great joy will be that she's been given 6 more years by you to reaffirm our common humanity. And we have ample evidence that that is what our country desperately needs.

So don't you pass a person between now and November 3d—don't pass a one, and Barbara Boxer will go back to Washington.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:58 p.m. in the Peacock Room at the Mark Hopkins Intercontinental Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Mark Buell and his wife, Susie Thompsons Buell; former Senator Alan Cranston; gubernatorial candidate Lt. Gov. Gray Davis of California; Art Torres, State Democratic chair; Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel; and

Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Statement on the Student Loan Default Rate

October 26, 1998

When I came into office, there was a student loan default crisis in this Nation. Nearly one out of every four students was failing to pay back his loan.

Today I am proud to announce that we have brought the default rate down below 10 percent, the lowest rate since these data have been collected. The student loan program is now a shining example of Government providing opportunity with accountability.

Some of those failing to pay back their loans were victims of fly-by-night schools that never followed through on their promises. I am proud that over the past 6 years, we have eliminated 1,065 schools from the student loan program, protecting students and taxpayers from fraud and abuse.

Other students had difficulty affording their loan payments, because they were just getting on their feet, or they had decided to take low-paying jobs serving their communities. I am pleased that the reforms for which I fought have given those borrowers a wide variety of options, including paying off their loans as a percentage of their income over time. And because of our economic strategy of reducing the deficit while investing in people's skills, there are jobs for those who finish college, so they can pay off their loans.

Unfortunately, there will always be some who just do not take their responsibilities seriously and then expect taxpayers to cover for them. Fortunately for the taxpayers, this government has expanded the tools that it has to find these defaulters and arrange for payment. That has taught others that a student loan is not a free ride.

This success comes from the hard work of Government. It is a testament to the commitment of our Secretary of Education, to the policies that we have implemented, and to the people who have put them into practice.

Statement on the Ecuador-Peru Border Settlement Agreement

October 26, 1998

I want to congratulate Presidents Mahuad of Ecuador and Fujimori of Peru on the historic signing today in Brasilia of a border settlement agreement between Ecuador and Peru. This signing marks the end of the last and longest-running source of armed international conflict in the Western Hemisphere.

I am proud of the role the United States has played, alongside the other Guarantors, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, in bringing about the settlement. Mack McLarty, my former Special Envoy for the Americas, and Ambassador Luigi Einaudi, our Special Envoy for the Ecuador/Peru Process, have worked tirelessly over the past 3 years in cooperation with the parties and the other Guarantors to bring about this historic peace settlement. On October 9, I met with Presidents Mahuad and Fujimori at the White House to accept their joint request for the four Guarantors of the Rio Protocol to help them reach a final settlement.

U.S. military personnel, along with those of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile have also made a vital contribution in manning the international observation force, which has monitored the cease-fire and helped maintain peace in the disputed area.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Women and Retirement Security

October 27, 1998

The President. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the White House. I want to thank the Vice President, the members of the administration, Congressman Cardin, all the panelists who are here, the satellite audience at the 12 other sites across our country. I'd like to say a special word of appreciation and welcome to Betty Freidan, who has written with such insight and appreciation for the challenges women face as they grow older.

We're here to talk about the special impact of the challenge to Social Security on the women of the United States. I would like to put it in, if I might, a larger context. Six

years ago, when the Vice President and I came here, we brought a new vision of Government against a backdrop of a \$290 billion deficit and the kind of problem we're here to talk about today that we knew was looming in the future. We believed that we could give the American people a Government that would live within its means but at the same time invest in and empower our people.

It led to an array of new policies in education and the economy, the budget, the environment, in health care, in crime, in welfare reform. Indeed, it led to the very effort to reinvent Government, to use the Vice President's phrase, and the great effort that he made in that regard. But over the last 6 years we have been more active, among other things, in family matters and health matters and a whole range of domestic areas, while giving the American people the smallest Federal establishment since President Kennedy was here.

And the results, I think, have been quite good for our people, in terms of prosperity. Opportunity is abundant; communities are stronger; families are more secure. This year, all year long, I have told the American people and done my best to persuade the Congress that it is terribly important to build on this prosperity and its newfound confidence to meet the remaining challenges this country faces on the edge of a new century, particularly, and perhaps most important, the need to save Social Security and to prepare for the retirement of the baby boomers.

On December 8th and 9th we will hold the first-ever White House Conference on Social Security, with a goal of paving the way toward a truly bipartisan national solution early next year. Social Security, as many of you know from your own experience and as all our panelists will be able to discuss in one way or the other, is more than a monthly check or an ID number. It represents a sacred trust among the generations. It represents a trust not only between grandparents, parents, and children, those in retirement and those that work, but also the able-bodied and those who are disabled. It is our obligation to one another, and it reflects our deepest values as Americans. And it must maintain a rock-solid guarantee.